

DECLARATION OF BETTY P. COFFMAN

1. I, Betty Coffman, do hereby declare that I am a professional in the music industry and have been involved in music education since 1970. I am personally familiar with the recorder market and have consistently followed the problems, developments, and improvements in that market with great interest throughout my teaching career.
2. A long-existing and significant problem for the music educator in teaching the recorder was that when changing from recorder playing to other activities such as singing, dancing, or playing other instruments, the recorder had to be set down, often on the desk or floor. This would occur intermittently during a music class period, leading to disruption of the teaching program, problems with hygiene, confusion of ownership and delays in resuming recorder work.
3. Before 1995, the use of recorder suspension devices to keep the recorder in close proximity to the performer was extremely rare. It was essentially limited to the efforts of a few teachers who tied a string into a loop that was then fastened below a bulge in the shaft of the recorder. This string-tying approach, however, had several drawbacks as follows:
 - a. It could only be used with recorders that included a bulge in the shaft design. It could not be effectively used with Renaissance-style recorders because their shafts did not include bulges around which a string could be fixed.
 - b. The requirement to tie the string into loops was extremely time-consuming for the teacher.
 - c. It was difficult to tie the loop to closely match the size of the recorder shaft, and maintaining precise consistency in the size of the loops was nearly impossible.
 - d. The string loop would lose its shape over time because of loosening of the knot.The string-tying solution was therefore inherently unreliable.

4. In 1996, Peripole began marketing and selling a recorder ring invented by Dr. Andrew Perry that has an appropriately sized ring attached to a string. This was the first device of its kind on the market and represented a major and significant innovation and improvement over the occasional string-tying approach for numerous reasons, as follows:
 - a. A recorder holder now existed for an instrument with a smooth, tapered shaft without any ridges or bulges.
 - b. Using this invention, the teacher's valuable time and efforts would no longer be consumed with tying knots in strings to fit around the recorder.
 - c. The recorder ring could be manufactured to closely match the size and shape of a recorder shaft at a specific point. This resulted in a ring of consistent and precise size and shape, whose quality held up well over time. Additionally, it was possible to assure the exact placement of the ring on the shaft of the recorder in a location where the ring and strap would not interfere with the fingering of the recorder, or with the passage of air through its wind passageway.
5. For each of these reasons and others, the recorder ring provided a much more reliable recorder suspension device than the string loop.
6. After Peripole began selling its recorder ring, others began recognizing the importance and practicality of this invention and started to make and sell their own recorder rings. Some of these rings were nearly exact copies of the Peripole recorder ring while others made slight modifications such as making the ring out of a flexible material and providing a Velcro attachment for the strap.
7. Unlike the string loop used in the past by some music teachers, the Peripole recorder ring is precisely shaped and sized to match the tapered shaft of the recorder at a desired location.

Accordingly, rather than relying on a bulge to keep the loop in place, the recorder ring can be slipped onto one end of a separated two-piece shaft and then slip upwards into the appropriate place along the recorder shaft. In addition to preventing the recorder ring from slipping off the recorder, this also ensures that the ring does not block any of the holes needed for playing the recorder. With the string loop, neither of these functions could be adequately provided.

8. The invention of the recorder ring was a new and innovative solution to the problems faced by the industry. The importance of this innovation is further exemplified by the later efforts of others to copy the invention directly or to otherwise adopt its beneficial features to solve these problems, despite not having previously had a similar product on the market.
9. Since the introduction of Dr. Perry's recorder ring, recorders having such a ring have become increasingly more popular because of the advantages provided by such a ring, while those without a ring have become less popular.
10. Also, since the introduction of Dr. Perry's recorder ring, others have attempted to sell strings or straps with pre-tied loops. Because of the problems identified previously, these have not gained the widespread popularity of Dr. Perry's recorder ring.

Under penalty of perjury, I declare the foregoing statements to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge and understanding.



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